The Top Runners' Quarterly

Newsletter of The Top Runners' Conference, The Official **Netrunner**® Players' Organization
Volume 9, Issue 1 All Four Quarters, 2005
http://toprunners.freeservers.com; http://www.arasaka.de

Editorial

by Jens Kreutzer
<jens@arasaka.de>

Finally, it has happened: The Top Runners' Quarterly has shrunk into The Top Runners' Annually. I do hope that this isn't permanent, though I can't promise anything. 2005 really has been one busy year for me; it just had everything: baby born, final exams, moving house, getting used to the new full-time job—you name it. Heck, there wasn't any time for *playing* **Netrunner**, let alone write about it.

Still, I wasn't all alone in it, as there have been some great people who contributed stuff, advised me and showed some remarkable enthusiasm. It's a pity that the efforts of the most enthuasistic of them all didn't really come to fruition in the end: Ryan Seney had the great and ambitious idea to try and go for an interview with Richard Garfield himself. That would indeed have been the holy grail of **Netrunner** journalism, something I'd never have the guts to aim at. Ryan created a rather long list of questions he wanted to ask, and he started writing official-sounding, impressive letters. Believe me, it was not for want of effort that we finally had to accept that Richard Garfield wasn't going to respond to Ryan's little request. Though it was a little bit disappointing, it wasn't unexpected; in fact, I can totally understand that Mr. Garfield has lots of other things to take care of (and usually gets paid to do just that as well).

So: no hard feelings at all, but I'm still happy that somebody has tried that feat I'd never have attempted on my own. Thanks a lot, Ryan!

Other than that, Richard Cripe has shouldered the mainstay of our *Famous Decks* article this time, and there have actually been a couple of "emails to the editor"! Keep it coming in 2006.

Since the GatlingEngine took down **Netrunner**, no popular and convenient way to play it online has emerged yet, or none that I know of anyway. But there's hope, as players are still tinkering with this issue. The following is a quote from an email by somebody with the handle Malhavoc Blackdrake that reached me in February 2005. I don't know whether the project has made any progress in the meantime, but some of the points Malhavoc raises are of general interest.

Ed.
Malhavoc, I wasn't aware of your NR online adaptation. Perhaps an article in the next TRQ would be an attractive way of creating some publicity? I'd be honored to host it.

Malhavoc
Sure! You can find the current NetRunner patch for MWS 0.94 on www.mwsdata.com/netrunner.html.

Publicity is what is needed but, as I've said, the current patch is lacking chat rooms and it's quite difficult to find opponents. The players on the main server are always rather looking just for ***Magic*** *games. Soon (at least I hope so) there will be an improved patch for MWS 0.95 (which, despite the name, is a totally new program compared to MWS 0.94).*

Somebody Else
Note: Using the text of the cards appears to be okay, but it is the use of copyrighted artwork that got cease-and-desist orders filed by WotC against several online game sites, such as CCGWorkshop and MTGPlay. My suggestion, use the templates and fill in the text box, but use alternate artwork.

Malhavoc
I'm gonna do they same thing they're doing now with ***Magic****. A brief summary: In these months every program which allowed to play MtG or other WotC games has been taken down (totally or partially). These include GCCG, CCGWorkshop, and MTGPlay. But MWS wasn't. Why? Because it comes with no games on its own. It's just an engine to run CCG games (and with 0.95, it will even be possible to run every other sort of game, such as Risk, for example). It comes with no database, no images, nothing; the* ***Magic*** *database is hosted on a Russian site, which, according to local laws, isn't illegal to host. Images are hosted by a fan site, which is probably in some Siberian wasteland, since it has survived without problems, while many others have not. This site however is in no way affiliated with MWS directly. On the other hand, differently from CCGWorkshop, using MWS does not require you to use their server, you can just connect directly with your opponent (as with Apprentice, you know). There is a server that is always up, but it's mainly used to avoid firewall problems during connections. This means that even if the developers were forced in some way to stop their project (something that's unlikely, however: they just produce a generic engine, as I said), users would be able to play with what they have for the time to come (maybe even spreading the program through P2P sharing?).*

So, in the end, what I'm creating is a patch with the database and the scripts needed to play, which is going to be legal to upload to the Russian site, and then I can make the images available through MWSDATA (to be downloaded

apart from the main patch).

*MWS is used by thousands of people to play **Magic** on many online leagues such as www.o-gaming.com and www.magic-league.com, and it has never been shot down by WotC. I don't think they'll care too much about **Netrunner**. And even if they did, once that **Netrunner** players have downloaded the patch and the program, there will be nothing that could stop them to play with it for the rest of their lives. ;-)*

I'm no expert on these legal matters and don't know how viable Malhavoc's suggestions are, but they sure are fun to read. I hope you enjoy the rest of this TRQ as well. Remember that 2006 will see **Netrunner**'s tenth anniversary, and if people want to celebrate, why not by writing an article for the TRQ?

Take care everybody,
Jens (TRQ Editor)

"Elementary, My Dear Wilson!" Famous Netrunner Stacks #20: Ice Destruction

by Jens Kreutzer
<jens@arasaka.de>
with Richard Cripe

"When I first started playing Netrunner, the whole rush of risking and taking damage appealed to me mightily, but this is the deck that made me really respect the game."
—Skip Pickle on the Netrunner-L, 7 November, 1997.

Breaking ice is what Runners do for a living—as long as they don't subscribe to the no-interaction Bad Publicity school, which isn't much fun. Selecting the right icebreakers for the stack is normally a very important part of deckbuilding. Though there are a couple of iceless Corp strategies out there, in your average game of **Netrunner**, Runners can be pretty sure to encounter some nasty defense subroutines along the way—so they had better pack some answers for that Colonel Failure or Haunting Inquisition.

Regardless, there are a few brave Runners who attempt the impossible: Running without any icebreakers! Their reasoning is this: Rather than installing expensive icebreakers and then paying up through the nose to break the same subroutines time and again during each run, it might be the smarter option to destroy the ice altogether as a more permanent solution. Of course, if there is no ice left because it has been destroyed, who needs ice-breakers?

Right from the beginning, **Netrunner** has had a few effects that can destroy ice. While Startup Immolator looks nice at first glance, it can only trash ice that has had its subroutines broken, so it isn't the right choice for a breakerless stack. Key to that strategy is the following pair:

Security Code WORM Chip (Prep - Sabotage) - 0

`Play only if you made a succesful run on HQ this turn. Trash a piece of unrezzed` **`ice`**`.`

Core Command: Jettison Ice (Prep - Sabotage) - 0

`Play only if you made a succesful run on HQ this turn. Pay the rez cost of a piece of rezzed` **`ice`** `to trash it.`

Both are extremely cheap to play with a cost of 0. Core Command of course can become a little more expensive depending on the rez cost of the ice in question, but at the beginning of the game, the Corp is unlikely to be able to afford rezzing big ice, and once this strategy gets going, the Corp won't get rich anytime soon (as will be explained later). It becomes clear that as long as the Runner can make successful runs on HQ, the ice on the Corp's data forts can be quite decimated—preferably before it is even rezzed. There is more, however:

Forged Activation Orders (Prep - Sabotage) - 1

`Choose a piece of` **`ice`**`. The Corp either rezzes that piece of` **`ice`** `or trashes it.`

The *Proteus* expansion added the following two cards to the list:

Demolition Run (Prep - Sabotage) - 4

`Make a run. If run is successful, do not access cards; instead, trash all rezzed` **`ice`** `on the fort on which you just made a run, and the Corp gives you three tags.`

Remote Detonator (Prep - Sabotage) - 7

`Play only if you made a successful run on a data fort this turn. Trash all rezzed` **`ice`** `on that fort, and the Corp gives you three tags.`

As we will see, these cards are only marginally useful for the breakerless approach. Forged Activation Orders is powerful because it works without a successful run and is cheap with a cost of 1. But the risk is high that the Corp player will just smile and rez the ice, making it much more expensive for the Runner to trash it later with Core Command. To avoid counterproductiveness here, the Runner had better include some way of ascertaining that the Corp indeed cannot afford to rez that piece of ice at that moment. The breakerless ice-destruction approach must hit hard and

fast to stand a chance, however, and can't bother with gaining intelligence first. Forged Activation Orders is a great card, but one that needs a stack specifically built around it, and this is not it.

Demolition Run and Remote Detonator are expensive, but offer the prospect of destroying many pieces of ice with just one card. The downside is that the ice must be rezzed already and that the fort to be affected must have been run successfully. This is a big dilemma: The Runner wants the fort to have as many rezzed pieces of ice as possible in order to make playing Demolition Run/Remote Detonator over Core Command worthwhile, but the more rezzed pieces of ice there are on the fort in question, the slimmer the chance of a breakerless stack to breach it in the first place. Plus, the Runner would have to think of a way to deal with accumulating lots of tags. So, the backbone of the stack must be WORM Chip and Core Command, after all.

For getting the most use out of these two work-horses of ice destruction, it is advisable to include a way of recycling them, e.g. Junkyard BBS. Running HQ in action 1, playing WORM Chip in action 2, junkyarding it in action 3 and playing it again in action 4 is one of the oldest "tricks" in **Netrunner** history, as it was posted to the Netrunner-L on April 27, 1996—only four days after the game's release! Since the HQ run can have happened at any time in the same turn, it's perfectly legal to play as many WORM Chips (or Core Commands) as you want during the rest of the turn, thereby increasing efficiency.

This is all very well, but what happens if the Corp ices HQ? Without icebreakers, the sabotage will come to an abrupt halt in front of a blocked HQ. Therefore, keeping HQ clear of any ice is the first priority of this strategy. The most important card for this is Inside Job, as it reliably bypasses one layer of ice. Other options are Social Engineering (not as reliable, but quite possibly cheaper) and Simulacrum (limited in scope to black ice, but very cheap and above all combinable with one of the Preps to pass two pieces of ice). The trouble starts as soon as the Corp manages to rez up two pieces of non-black ice on HQ.

Inside Job (Prep) – 2

`Make a run. You automatically pass the first piece of` **`ice`** `you encounter during that run.`

Social Engineering (Prep - Sabotage) - 1

`Hide at least 2 bits from your pool in your hand; the Corp then guesses how many bits you hid. If the Corp guesses correctly, lose that many bits. Otherwise, choose a data fort and a piece of` **`ice`** `on that fort. Then make a run on that fort, during which you automatically pass that piece of` **`ice.`**

Simulacrum (Resource - Connection - Hidden) - 0

`Trash: Pass a piece of AP` **`ice.`** `You may use this ability during an encounter with a piece of ice.`

Having no icebreakers installed leaves 4 MU empty for other programs. Fortunately, Shredder Uplink Protocol opens up an alternative route to HQ, and its 2-MU requirement is easily accomodated for once. After a successful Shredder run, the sabotage preps can clear away HQ ice. Effectively, an installed Shredder opens up another front for the Corp. Note though that one rezzed non-black ice on the Archives already shuts out Shredder, as Inside Job or Social Engineering cannot be combined with a Shredder action.

It is likely that soon, a veritable "ice war" of quick installing and trashing will begin. It is hoped that recycling the sabotage cards and reusing them will eventually lead to a dearth of ice cards, as the Corp doesn't draw enough ice cards to keep up. As far as bits are concerned, however, the Corp usually has easier methods of gaining money. To even out the score, Restrictive Net Zoning is used to make installing new ice on HQ an unpleasant experience for the Corp.

Since the primary goal is to run HQ and to keep it open to attack, it is sensible to use this activity for virus cards that affect HQ and for cards that bankrupt the Corp. Favorites are Vienna 22 (access everything in HQ after a couple of runs), Crumble (trash the ice before it is installed—fiendish in combination with Vienna 22), Taxman, Priority Wreck, Weather-to-Finance Pipe, Credit Subversion (various bankrupting effects), Butcher Boy (bitgaining for the Runner) and Edited Shipping Manifests (gives the Runner bits *and* costs the Corp, but involves a tag that must be dealt with). Note that it can be argued that Ice Destruction is just a subtype of the HQ Attack/Bit Denial approach.

If HQ is wide open, ice on other forts can be trashed to let the Runner run them at will. The focus should remain on HQ, though. Here is the first ice-destruction stack that was sent to the Netrunner-L (on 29 May, 1996).

Ice Destruction
by Christopher Fitzgerald

4	**Security Code WORM Chip**
2	**Core Command: Jettison Ice**
2	**Forged Activation Orders**
3	**Junkyard BBS**
4	**Inside Job**
3	**Social Engineering**
1	**Shredder Uplink Protocol**
4	**Restrictive Net Zoning**
2	**Mantis, Fixer-at-Large**

3	**Jack 'n' Joe**
5	**Livewire's Contacts**
5	**Score!**
2	**Short-term Contract**
4	**Fall Guy**
1	**Wilson, Weeflerunner Apprentice**

The original stack had only 3 Inside Jobs, but with 44 cards, it wouldn't be legal under the current rules (at the beginning, Runner decks had a minimum of only 40 cards), so I have added another one.

We see most of the core cards in place in Christopher's stack, but he still lacks effects that attack the Corp's bit pool apart from Restricted Net Zoning. Perhaps this is the Ice Destruction strategy in its purest incarnation. It just seems that four copies of WORM Chip might not be enough to show up regularly in hand when needed, even with Mantis and Jack 'n' Joes.

Back in 1996, much of the punch behind Ice Destruction lay in its surprise value. The strategy was brand-new, and most Corps didn't know how to counteract it. However, things have changed, and now Ice Destruction is a well-known approach. As soon as a Corp realizes what is going on, it will try to put two to three affordable pieces of ice on HQ (and one on the Archives). The bitter truth is that if this happens, the stack is helpless without icebreakers and can't hope to win. Skip Pickle put it like this in his post on 7 November, 1997: "The deck is worthless without a fall-back position."

And so, in order to be competitive, the "breakerless" Ice Destruction stack should include one generic breaker as a contingency plan for those times when the ice just grows too thick to breach. Possible candidates are Bartmoss Memorial Icebreaker (with Joan of Arc), Morphing Tool, Krash and Blink (the last one suggested by Frisco Del Rosario).

Here we have a deck by Richard Cripe, who "put Bartmoss in as a last resort, but […] usually won without installing it." It appeared on the Netrunner-L on 24 September, 1996.

Virtually Breakerless
by Richard Cripe

9	**Security Code WORM Chip**
2	**Core Command: Jettison Ice**
1	**Remote Detonator**
1	**Junkyard BBS**
9	**Inside Job**
1	**Shredder Uplink Protocol**
9	**Restrictive Net Zoning**
1	**Vienna 22**
1	**Crumble**
1	**Bartmoss Memorial Icebreaker**
1	**Joan of Arc**
1	**Newsgroup Filter**
2	**Crash Everett, Inventive Fixer**
1	**The Short Circuit**
3	**MIT West Tier**
1	**Bodyweight Data Crèche**
1	**Tycho Mem Chip**
2	**Full Body Conversion**
1	**Armored Fridge**
1	**Total Genetic Retrofit**

It's interesting that Richard includes only one bitgainer card at all, Newsgroup Filter. He is also light on card-drawers, just including three MIT West Tiers. But he runs nine copies of all the key cards, and that means that he won't have to search for them long. Vienna 22 and Crumble pose a big threat to the Corp, and since the Remote Detonator gives three tags, Richard invests in a variety of meat damage prevention and tag removal, which also comes in handy versus Tag-'n'-Bag Corps. If the lone Short Circuit gets drawn, a frightening array of programs can be installed easily. We are told that Richard had "toyed with Bodyweight Synthetic Blood, Gremlins, Priority Wreck, N.E.T.O. and such", which had worked, but that it was a matter of personal preference.

Here is my own take on an Ice Destruction stack. It has only four copies of the key sabotage cards—if one is drawn, it should be recycled with Junkyard BBS if at all possible. Simulacrum is an integral part of the ice-bypassing arsenal. The focus is on information gathering this time around, so that the Runner knows when the Corp won't be able to afford rezzing certain pieces of ice. There is a plethora of HQ-attack cards available, which can be installed with The Shell Traders as they come up. With Brokers and Newsgroup Filter, along with Butcher Boy, this deck includes more bitgainers than the other two—which it can use to pay for Core Commands and the expensive (but versatile) Morphing Tool if push comes to shove.

Informed Ice Destruction
by Jens Kreutzer

4	**Security Code WORM Chip**
5	**Core Command: Jettison Ice**
1	**Forged Activation Orders**
2	**Junkyard BBS**
4	**Inside Job**
2	**Simulacrum**
1	**Shredder Uplink Protocol**
2	**Restrictive Net Zoning**
1	**Vienna 22**
1	**Crumble**
1	**Butcher Boy**
1	**Weather-to-Finance Pipe**
1	**Romp through HQ**

1	**Synchronized Attack on HQ**
1	**HQ Interface**
1	**Morphing Tool**
1	**Newsgroup Filter**
3	**Broker**
1	**The Shell Traders**
1	**SeeYa**
2	***Ice and Data*'s Guide to the Net**
1	**Mantis, Fixer-at-Large**
1	**Jack 'n' Joe**
1	**Imp**
2	**Tycho Mem Chip**
1	**Skullcap**
1	**Fall Guy**
1	**Wilson, Weeflerunner Apprentice**

To be competitive, this deck would have to be designed a bit tighter; as it is, it is much too slow and lacks consistency. But it is nice to try it out for getting to know the various possibilities of an Ice Destruction stack. Pulling out the detection cards, HQ Interface and Romp through HQ would make room for some more WORM Chips and Restrictive Net Zonings.

Sadly, Ice Destruction as a strategy of its own hasn't weathered time very well. There is much power to be had with HQ Attack/Bit Denial, as tournament reports can easily testify, but I see that approach as a separate strategy that supercharges elements of Ice Destruction but doesn't care very much for the idea of "breakerless". As has been said before, Corps nowadays know exactly how to counteract Ice Destruction, and under normal circumstances, it won't stand a chance in Constructed. That AI Chief Financial Officer is rather popular only adds to the problem, since a Corp that just recycles five cards in one action, freshly-trashed ice among them, is more than frustrating.

Since this is so, I haven't managed to find a deck list that exemplifies a "killer" Breakerless stack. However, I *have* managed to get **Netrunner** sage Richard Cripe to kindly tell us something about his ideas concerning Ice Destruction. He wrote an email in question-and-answer style, which follows below.

"Where to begin? Let's start with an overview.

Q: How does Ice Destruction (ID) advance the Runner's position?

A: ID does several things.

1) IT allows unfettered access to the Corporation's forts, thus making it easier to access cards and hopefully score agenda.
2) It puts fear into the Corp player's mind, making him feel unprotected and vulnerable.
3) It accesses HQ quite a bit, allowing the Runner to see what options the Corporation has so he can prepare for it, and hopefully scoring agenda.
4) It's a stack that allows the Runner to attack early and often, which often disrupts Corporations' plans for world domination.

It should be noted that more experienced Corporation players will not panic as much as new players when they find they are up against an ID stack. In this case, the fear benefit is greatly reduced.

Q: How would you characterize an ID stack?

A: It's all about control. The Runner wants to control the game and control the Corporation's actions. His desire is to maneuver the Corporation into spending cards, actions, and bits in order to draw, install, and rez ice that will eventually just be trashed anyway. As long as the Corporation player is not advancing agendas, he generally can't win.

Q: Aren't there better ways of control?

A: Yes, but they often revolve around viruses from the *Proteus* set, which are often viewed as overpowered. If you do not or cannot play with those cards, the ID stack can work very well without any *Proteus* whatsoever. It does benefit from a couple of *Proteus* cards, but they are generally not essential cards.

Q: What are the weaknesses of an ID stack?

A1: A large weakness is when it runs up against an iceless R&D. In these scenarios, the Runner is the one who is put on the defensive and has to come up with answers quickly. The next weakness is for decks which use lots of cheap ice/payback ice. They make it harder to get rid of the ice quickly as most ID stacks will run more Security Code WORM Chips than Core Command: Jettison Ice.

A2: The biggest weakness of an ID stack is a smart Corporation player with a fast-advancement deck. He can just sit back and collect bits and advancement cards so that he can score agendas without any ice required whatso-ever. In this scenario, it just comes down to who finds the agenda first.

Q: What sort of bit engine does an ID stack use?

A: Any really. Loan from Chiba, Bodyweight Synthetic Blood/Organ Donor or Newsgroup Filter all can generate enough bits to run the deck. There are advantages and disadvantages to each, but none lend themselves to ID specifically.

Q: Can an ID stack run breakerless?

A: Not really. A good Corp will rez some ice on HQ at some point, and you can't play enough Inside Job/Core Command: Jettison Ice to ensure you have one at any given moment. And some Corps with cheap ice will be able to rez two ice on HQ and one on Archives, at which point you have to have a breaker.

Q: OK, so which breaker (suite) is best?

A: Bartmoss Memorial Icebreaker is a very good choice. You don't use it often, and it's usually to break only one or two pieces of ice, so the 0 strength and its one-in-six chance of self-trashing aren't very big downsides. Throw in a Joan of Arc, and you're good to go.

Q: So, how many Core Commands: Jettison Ice and Security Code WORM Chips do I need?

A: About 1/4 to 1/5 of your deck, assuming you have a decent draw engine. I tend to favor WORM Chip, so I run about 7 of them and 4 Core Commands in a 45-card deck. And I still play with the Junkyard BBS.

Q: What about Restrictive Net Zoning? Worthwhile?

A: Absolutely. Again, assuming you're going to go through your deck fairly quickly, 4 or 5 should suffice. The *only* target for them should be HQ.

Q: Forged Activation Orders? Startup Immolator? Edited Shipping Manifests?

A: No, no, no. Forged Activation Orders isn't guaranteed to destroy ice, so it isn't worth it. Startup Immolator requires that you break the ice in order to use it, and it's often easier to trash it with Core Command than it is to break the piece of ice. Edited Shipping Manifests doesn't destroy ice and can't score agenda, so it isn't getting you any closer to winning the game.

Q: Remote Detonator/Demolition Run? Too dangerous?

A: They are good cards to reclaim the advantage if the Corp manages to get a decent setup despite your best efforts. I wouldn't play more than one though.

Q: What does *Proteus* do for ID?

A: Primarily, Enterprise, Inc., Shields (against trap decks) and Remote Detonator (see above).

Q: What does *Classic* do for ID?

A: Nothing.

Rough Ice Destruction Deck Outline
by Richard Cripe

7	**Security Code WORM Chip**
4	**Core Command: Jettison Ice**
1	**Remote Detonator**
1	**Junkyard BBS**
4	**Inside Job**
1	**Shredder Uplink Protocol**
4	**Restrictive Net Zoning**
1	**Bartmoss Memorial Icebreaker**
1	**Joan of Arc**
1	**Microtech AI Interface**
1	**Newsgroup Filter**
3	**Score!**
2	**Crash Everett, Inventive Fixer**
1	**The Short Circuit**
2	**Stakeout**
4	**Bodyweight Synthetic Blood**
3	**MIT West Tier**
1	**Afreet**
1	**Emergency Self-Construct**
1	**Enterprise, Inc., Shields**
1	**Total Genetic Retrofit**

What makes this deck run:

A) Crash Everett. The sooner he hits the table, the better off you'll be. Expect to always trash one drawn card once he's up. There are several cards here which are very specific for when they can be used and if it's not that time right now, feel free to trash them. There are 3 MIT West Tiers to get back stuff later.

B) Don't be afraid to burn an MIT West Tier early. There are three so you can.

C) Don't be afraid to install Shredder Uplink Protocol as an early surprise. It'll get you into HQ so you can use WORM Chip to clear ice on HQ. It is very satisfying to go action 1: install Shredder, action 2: use it, action 3: WORM Chip, action 4: WORM Chip.

D) Don't be afraid to overwrite Shredder later, when it's no longer useful.

E) Try not to let the Corp get a chance to rez any ice. Avoid running on forts with ice if at all possible.

F) Once you're pretty set up (no ice on HQ, 3+ RNZ on HQ, no ice on R&D), you can get the Microtech AI Interface to start looking through R&D. Alternatively, if people start expecting ID by putting ice on HQ and Archives on turn one, then you can use Microtech AI Interface on turn 1 to force them to devote some resources to R&D.

G) Don't install programs unless you think you'll need

them. Emergency Self-Construct, Enterprise, Inc., Shields and Afreet make great cards for Crash to trash if you're not going to need them.

H) If at all possible, don't let the Corporation see that you have a Remote Detonator until you use it.

I) Make a regular run on Archives once or twice during the game.

Hope that helps!"

Richard doesn't seem to be a big fan of Simulacrum, which is a favorite of mine in this kind of stack. Though useless if the Corp doesn't run (and rez) any Black ice, it is dead cheap, a nice surprise, and expands the "ceiling" of ice depth you can breach to two on HQ and one on the Archives. Corp players who are used to "shutting out" the ice-destruction Runner by two layers of ice on HQ and then feeling safe might be in for a nasty surprise; I run one or two and recycle with Junkyard BBS if the Corp throws Black ice my way.

For reasons of completeness, I'd like to quote the book *Mastering Netrunner* by Ben Matthews and Charles Schwope, who also dabbled in breakerless tech (p. 60):

You Really Don't Need Ice
by Ben Matthews and Charles Schwope

2	**Security Code WORM Chip**
2	**Core Command: Jettison Ice**
3	**Junkyard BBS**
4	**Inside Job**
2	**Social Engineering**
1	**Shredder Uplink Protocol**
5	**Restrictive Net Zoning**
1	**Bartmoss Memorial Icebreaker**
1	**Joan of Arc**
8	**Livewire's Contacts**
2	**Broker**
8	**Bodyweight Synthetic Blood**
2	**MIT West Tier**
1	**Wilson, Weeflerunner Apprentice**
2	**Fall Guy**
1	**Access through Alpha**

Their comment: "This deck started out breakerless but eventually moved its way to its current configuration. […] The deck was very good originally but suffered as people got used to playing it. In addition it had no way of locking the opponent down. Often all of the ice would be stripped off of HQ, and HQ could be run as often as desired. However, the Corp would just place the cards directly into a SDF and advance from there. Easy additions would include some HQ interfaces and Romp Through HQs, converting the deck type. Also, Precision Bribery would be a good addition, as well as Crumble. Perhaps the best move would be to change the bit engine to be more effective."

I think the best move would be to lend more focus to WORM Chip and Core Command, putting more copies into the deck. Livewire's as a bit engine doesn't cut it, as the authors observe correctly. But this deck list is a nice basic version of the strategy, though it seems a bit outdated, of course (the book is from 1996).

One other thing needs to be said about ice destruction: Since everyone and his brother are playing Glaciers these days, Core Command has become even more powerful—it's quite satisfying to trash this annoying wall *and* nix one agenda point for zero bits.

All in all, Ice Destruction as a module of other strategies (notably HQ Attack/Bit Denial) is a tournament powerhorse. In its incarnation of "breakerless", it's more of a philosophy than a realistic concept, as you should always include some sort of breaker as a backup. I can't say that even Breakerless With Backup is a very strong approach in general, but it is a **Netrunner** classic. It's also lots of fun. I'd recommend it for every player to try it at least once.

Emails to the Editor: *Golden Loop* Revisited

edited by Jens Kreutzer
<jens@arasaka.de>

The following reader comments on the "Golden Loop" article in the last issue have reached me. It's always nice to get some feedback, so please feel free to email me your thoughts.

Kristian Priisholm, Denmark:

A note about Golden Loop: In my local environment, one guy hooked another agenda on to the loop: Black Ice Quality Assurance, taking advantage of the fact that Black Ice Quality Assurance (as far as I know) is the only agenda with two types, Research and Black. Of course it's not a competitive idea, but still quite funny, I think.

Ed.: Though there are quite a few agendas that have multiple keywords (like Asset and Ambush), Black Ice Quality Assurance is indeed the only one that combines two keywords relevant to Golden Loop. Nice one, Kristian!

Gilles Delcourt, Belgium:

I've just finished reading the last TRQ issue (once again: good work), and I am surprised that your Golden Loop article doesn't mention the use of Corporate Negotiating Center.

Considering how many agendas will be in your HQ (and how often), a few rezzed Corporate Negotiating Centers will provide enough bits to power the deck. Therefore you can afford a few more pieces of ice, and if the Runner makes up his mind to trash the CNCs, their trash cost of 3 means that while you won't get

richer, the Runner will quickly run out of bits (not to mention that in such a case he'll have to trash any Top Runners' Conference in play).

Moreover, if the Runner decides not to run on suspected CNCs, the Corporation might install a few agendas among the CNCs, allowing their quick scoring on the next turn. It's quite an enjoyable game of teasing and bluffing!

This strategy has been proved viable in tournaments, especially in France, where CNCs have been played a lot in recent years.

A typical deck using this concept could look like this:

6	**Genetics-Visionary Acquisition**
6	**Executive Extraction**
6	**Artificial Security Directors**
8	**Corporate Negotiating Center**
4	**Systematic Layoffs**
4	**Scramble**
4	**Haunting Inquisition**
3	**Asp**
4	**Banpei**

Ed.: Gilles, that's a fascinating addition to the "Loop" strategy I wasn't aware of. Thanks a lot for giving us an update on French and Belgian tech! Now I'm off to my collection to check whether I have 8 Corporate Negotiating Centers…

Did You Know?

Bits and Pieces from the NR Trivia Collection

#20: Spinn® Public Relations

by Jens Kreutzer
<jens@arasaka.de>

Spinn® Public Relations is another one of those inconspicuous cards: Has been around since the very beginning, run-of-the-mill effect, very modest in power. You won't see it played much in Constructed decks, but it does have its place in Sealed as a bitgainer that the Corp might include or might not include.

Like its Runner *alter ego* Streetware Distributor, Spinn® comes with the drawback that it is always an investment in the future: Three bits per action is good, but you don't get it right away. Since you seldom can be sure that the game will last another three turns, it's obvious why Spinn® is a no-no in fast-paced Constructed. Sealed games usually last longer, so Spinn® gets its chance to shine. Though other nodes like BBS Whispering Campaign or Depart-ment of Truth Enhancement are more efficient and above all faster at bitgaining, three bits per action *is* a good deal, and because most Runners will be unimpressed by Spinn® and therefore shy away from paying the trash cost, the card perhaps isn't all that bad after all.

The name of this Public Relations corp is a nod to "spin doctor", a word that refers to "a political spokesperson employed to promote a favourable interpretation of events to journalists" (Oxford English Dictionary). Doubtlessly, Spinn® Public Relations offer their services to corporations doing much the same: Creating a glorifying ad campaign, inventing some excuse to cover up an atrocity, throwing dirt on a competitor—always close to the truth, perhaps, but not really the truth. As the flavor text suggests, the mindless masses are only too eager to swallow up the latest fantasy doctored by the good people at Spinn® : "Of course it's true! I saw it on the 'vid." The cyberpunks (and Runners) of the **Netrunner** universe know, however, that anything broadcast on the 'vid (i.e., television) should on the contrary be viewed with a healthy dose of suspicion.

The interesting thing about this otherwise unspectacular card is its artwork, though. Todd Wade has altered the image considerably, but the truth is that he used a photograph as his starting point. This photo depicts a real building in Munich, Germany, which happens to be the corporate headquarters of a big German banking corp: Hypo-Vereinsbank. The address is:

Bayerische Hypo- und Vereinsbank AG
Kardinal-Faulhaber-Straße 1
80333 München
Germany

If you come to Munich, that is one sight you should not miss!

According to their webpage
www.hypovereinsbank.de,
this corp controls financial assets of around 111 billion eurobucks, with 400,000 customers. In 2004, they had 21,640 employees. Hypo-Vereinsbank is one of the biggest banking corps in Europe. Its history goes all the way back to the year 1780, when some German princes were eager to sell their own subjects as soldiers to England, who were then sent on to America to fight the French (and later, the insurgent colonies). It was convenient to have a bank of one's own to get at the English money more quickly. Today, we hope, Hypo-Vereinsbank has much more beneficient goals (and nothing to do with spin doctoring)—they do sponsor the arts and artists, which gives us a good impression. So no Bad Publicity counters today!

TRC Administrative Personnel

Chair:	Douglas Kaufman <Rabbismall@aol.com>
Program Director:	Argi Flack <argiflack@aol.com>
Administrative Director:	D. J. Barens <thedeej@geocities.com>
Membership Director:	Jason Erdmann <erdmann@facstaff.wisc.edu>
Membership Secretary:	David Nolan <daffyd@worldpath.net>
Newsletter Editor:	Dr. Jens Kreutzer <jens@arasaka.de>
Rules Sensei:	Holger Janssen <Holger.Janssen@bgt.de>
Secretary of Rankings:	Matthias Nagy <100642.3543@compuserve.com>
TRC Webmaster:	Scott Greig <scott@escape.ca>

Cyberpunk 2.0.2.0., **Cyberpunk**, and *Netrunner* therein are trademarks of R. Talsorian Games, Inc. Copyrights in certain texts, graphic designs, characters, and places derived from **Cyberpunk 2.0.2.0.** are the property of R. Talsorian Games, Inc., and are produced under license to Wizards of the Coast, Inc.
Wizards of the Coast, **Magic: The Gathering**, **Magic**, Dungeons & Dragons, D&D, *Proteus, Silent Impact,* and *Classic* are trademarks of Wizards of the Coast, Inc.
This newsletter and all articles herein are ©2005 The Top Runners' Conference Official **Netrunner** Players' Organization. Readers are encouraged to reproduce and distribute this newsletter, but it is prohibited to sell it for personal profit or to alter it in any way.